



S P R I N G

N E E D S

N E W S L E T T E R

Update From The President

Hi all. 2021 has started off very well for all of us here at The NEEDS Center. We finally seem to be getting back toward a (relative) sense of normalcy.

The past year has presented us with a whole host of challenges, for the people we support, their families, and everyone who works with us here at The NEEDS Center.

We are very fortunate here at the NEEDS Center that we have outstanding professionals at every layer of our organization. This is most clearly shown by our tremendous group of Direct Support Professionals, and Program Coordinators. These 2 positions are the backbone of our organization, and they have risen to every challenge that has been presented to them over the past year.

This spring presents us with new hope largely due to:

- Vaccination efforts – nearly everyone who receives services from, or works for The NEEDS Center has received both doses of the Pfizer vaccine, and are considered to be immune to COVID-19.
- On-going surveillance testing – we continue to hold COVID-19 tests every 2 weeks for our employees and once a month for the people we support.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – we are fully stocked for all PPE including: masks (surgical, KN 95, N95 etc.), gowns, face shields, hand sanitizer etc.
- Preventative steps that have been put in place to address the pandemic, and our staff members' outstanding efforts to follow all of them.

Given these factors, we have started to:

- Re-open our day programs
- Individuals that we support residentially have been able to return to their day programs that are operated by other providers
- Access the community in a more regular and meaningful way than was possible during the height of the pandemic
- Open visitation for family members and loved ones

We have made great progress, and will continue to make strides toward getting back to a real sense of normal. None of this would have been possible without the outstanding group of staff members who work directly with the people we support. We all owe each and every one of them a sincere debt of gratitude for all of their efforts, and outstanding work.

Jim Sperry, President and CEO

The NEEDS Center

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Celebrating the Holidays!



Goodbye 2020!

The people we support from Walden had a comical approach to collectively ending the year. Everybody donned a matching t-shirt that read “I survived 2020 and all I got was this lousy t-shirt”. Like the folks from Walden, we are equally as happy to move forward and embrace a new year!



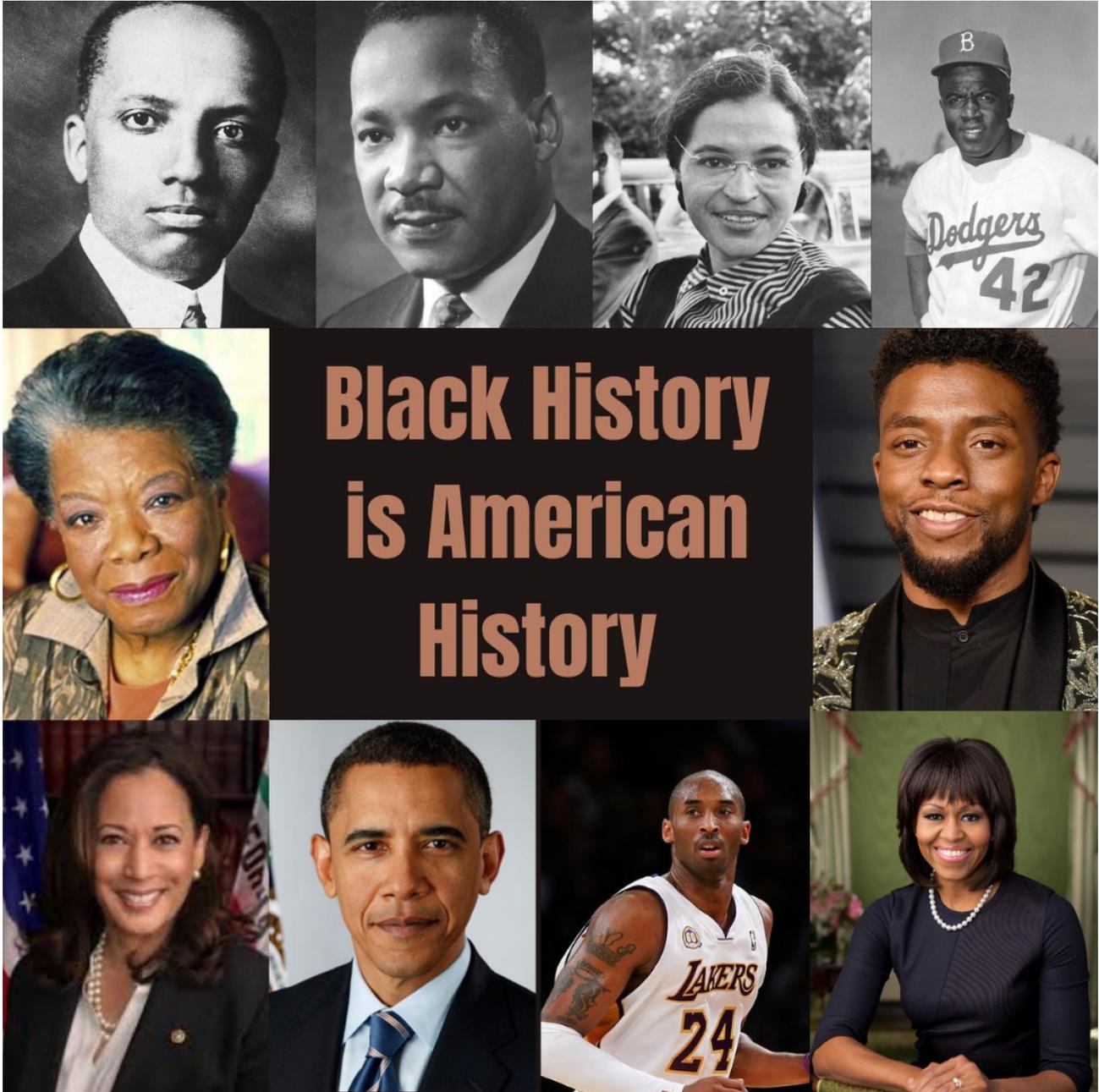
Happy New Year!

On New Years Day, The NEEDS Center hosted a small video chat to discuss goals and plans for the new year. Lyndsey noted she is looking forward to leaving the “bad stuff” in 2020 and focusing on “moving forward” in 2021. Uchenna jokingly said she is planning to “leave her attitude behind in 2020” and wants to be more independent in 2021. Abdul mentioned his goals of continuing to make healthy choices which many others agreed with.



February is Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, The NEEDS Center celebrated and reflected on some of the people who made America what it is today! We are proud to be an organization that celebrates diversity and inclusion for all!





North East Educational and
Developmental Support Center

DDS Direct Support Certificate Program

|Now Accepting Students|

To obtain an application:
please contact the community college closest to you
or

Come to our main office in Tewksbury

Course fees and book costs are **FULLY REIMBURSED** by the NEEDS Center

Resulting in **NO COST** for NEEDS Center Staff!

Upon successful completion of program
employees (who are benefit eligible) will **RECEIVE A \$1,000 BONUS**

APPLY TODAY!

The Certificate consists of 21-22 college level credits.

It is an educational program especially designed to enhance the
knowledge and skills of direct support workers

The Certificate is designed to strengthen writing,
problem-solving, and critical thinking skills by including
readings, assignments and discussion of the daily experiences,
challenges, and concerns of direct support workers.

Middlesex Community College:
Julia Mirras

Middlesex Community College—Lowell
33 Keane Square
Lowell, MA 01852
Tel: (978) 656-3189

Email: mirrasj@middlesex.mass.edu

Northern Essex Community College:
Donna Johnson

Northern Essex Community College
Elliot Way
Haverhill, MA 01830
Tel: (978) 556-3303
Fax: (978) 556-7713

Email: DJohnson1@necc.mass.edu

North Shore Community College:
Erinn Gilmore

North Shore Community College
One Ferncroft Road
Danvers, MA 01923
Tel: (978) 762-4000, ext 6671
Fax: (781) 477-2146

Email: egilmore@northshore.edu



Happy Valentine's Day!

On Valentine's Day the people we support participated in an activity that encouraged them to use self love affirmations. They also helped spread some love to some of our staff with Valentine's Day cards and chocolate roses!



Diversity & Inclusion Committee

In January, the Diversity and Inclusion committee met multiple times and discussed different topics. Among the topics discussed, we recognized Haiti's independence day, we talked about Martin Luther King Jr, we discussed COVID 19 internationally, we talked about home schooling, the presidential cabinet picks, and the NEEDS to give clothing drive. In addition, we had a meeting on racial healing day, during that meeting we discussed the attack on the U.S. capitol and where we are as a nation when it comes to racism.

In February, for our monthly meeting we recognized the Dominican Republic's independence day, we also recognized black history month, we talked about the vaccine and the NEEDS to give clothing drive.

In March, we did a presentation on the film "13th" which is about the 13th amendment. Our next inclusion and Diversity meeting will be on April 6th!

- Diversity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chairs

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+ Healthcare Corner +

Vitamin D and your Health

Its name can be deceiving, but Vitamin D is not actually a vitamin, but a prohormone, a precursor to a hormone. Vitamins are nutrients the body cannot create, but our bodies can create Vitamin D. Our bodies need Vitamin D for many reasons including good bone and teeth health, but did you know that Vitamin D also aids in fighting diseases such as diabetes? It also boosts our immune system, brain function, nervous system, and mood. Vitamin D supports lung function and cardiovascular health.

A deficiency in Vitamin D in children leads to rickets, which softens the bones and may cause changes in the bone structure, causing deformities in the developing bones. A deficiency in Vitamin D in adults leads to Osteomalacia, or softening of the bones. Osteomalacia causes poor bone density, leading to injury and muscle weakness. Osteoporosis often goes hand in hand with Vitamin D deficiency. People who live in northern latitudes or areas of high pollution, work night shifts, or are homebound should aim to consume vitamin D from food sources whenever possible. Darker skin, for example, and sunscreen, reduce the body's ability to absorb the ultraviolet radiation B (UVB) rays from the sun. Absorbing sunlight is essential for the skin to produce vitamin D.

Signs of Vitamin D Deficiency include chronic illness or infections, fatigue, bone and neck pain, hair loss, muscle pain, low mood and impaired wound healing. Your doctor can do a blood test for Vitamin D deficiency, and there are reliable kits that can be purchased online as well. If Vitamin D deficiency is long-standing it can cause cardiovascular conditions, autoimmune problems, neurological diseases, infections, pregnancy complications and certain cancers, especially breast, prostate, and colon.

Foods containing high Vitamin D include, fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel and tuna. Egg yolks, cheese, beef liver, mushrooms, fortified milk and fortified cereals and juices. Very few foods contain significant amounts of vitamin D, so people should ensure they get enough Vitamin D by scheduling regular time outdoors.

According to the Vitamin D Council, this could be:

- 15 minutes for a person with light skin
- a couple of hours for a person with dark skin

These are estimated time frames and each skin tone is different. Sunscreen should be applied after the suggested amount of times above. Springtime is a great time of year to get outside and boost your Vitamin D levels!



Winter Time!

As in previous winter seasons, the people we support love to go outside and enjoy the winter weather! They help shovel, make snow balls, and even take a few moments for some pictures. No better way to make memories!





North East Educational and
Developmental Support Center



You can now help The NEEDS Center when you shop eligible items online at Amazon!

When you shop for eligible items at smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

How to sign up:

- 1. Go to smile.amazon.com**
- 2. Sign in using your existing Amazon account**
- 3. Search for a charity**
"North East Educational and Developmental Support Center Inc"
- 4. Select your charity**
- 5. Check off acceptance box**
- 6. IOS or Android, start Amazon app**
- 7. Go to ☰, Select Settings**
- 8. Select AmazonSmile, Turn on AmazonSmile**

Socially Distanced Fun!

Covid-19 may have had us hunkered down but it certainly did not halt the active lifestyle of the people we support! From leisurely activities like painting to vigorous activities like working out, our guys have kept busy through it all!



Stakeholders Meeting

Over the past year, we have held regular virtual stakeholder meetings. These have been an invaluable tool for providing direct communication with all of the parents, guardians, staff members and other involved stakeholders over the past year. We will continue to offer these meetings about once per month going forward, and will eventually look to get back to having in person meetings as soon as it is possible to do so safely.

Summary

Thank you for taking the time to read this edition of the NEEDS Center Newsletter. We hope you enjoyed it, and we look forward to 2021 being a much better year than 2020 was! If you have any suggestions for making improvements to the newsletter, please contact Matthew Seidell via email at mseidell@needsctr.org.

